

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computerized method for rewarding use of a payment product by the payment product holder, the method comprising the steps of:

issuing a payment product from an issuer to a holder, said payment product representing funds available to said holder, said payment product providing means of payment for at least one purchase transaction by said holder,

determining whether said at least one purchase transaction using said payment product is a qualifying purchase transaction in compliance with pre-defined rewards eligibility criteria of said issuer,

providing a value redeemable by said holder for at least one benefit based on said at least one purchase transaction if said at least one purchase transaction using said payment product is a qualifying purchase transaction,

determining whether a qualifying purchase transaction includes the purchase of at least one travel ticket and, if so, determining a travel distance associated with said at least one travel ticket and providing an additional value redeemable by said holder for said at least one benefit based on said determined travel distance, and

providing for redemption of at least a part of at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said payment product is at least one of a credit card, a debit card, a bank card, a smart card, and an automated teller machine card.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said qualifying purchase transaction includes the purchase of at least one of goods and services from any provider thereof.

4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of presenting said at least one benefit for selection by said holder in a catalog including at least one of goods and services.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein said at least one benefit is selected from a provider of at least one of goods and services different from a provider of at least one of goods and services associated with said qualifying purchase transaction.

6. The method according to claim 4, wherein said at least one benefit includes at least one of goods and services that are travel-related.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted travel on a carrier of said holder's choosing.

8. The method according to claim 6, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted travel to a destination of said holder's choosing.

9. The method according to claim 6, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted lodging of said holder's choosing.

10. The method according to claim 4, wherein said catalog is provided over a global computer network.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein said global computer network is the Internet.

12. The method according to claim 1, wherein said step of providing for redemption of at least a part of at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit includes the step of fulfilling a request by said holder to redeem at least part of said at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein said step of fulfilling a request by said holder to redeem at least part of said at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit is effected by at least one of said issuer and a fulfillment representative of said issuer.

14. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of obtaining Level 3 Data associated with said qualifying purchase transaction, and wherein said travel distance associated with said at least one travel ticket is determined based on said Level 3 Data.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein said Level 3 Data is obtained together with transaction data associated with said qualifying purchase transaction.

16. The method according to claim 14, wherein individual legs of a trip associated with each travel ticket purchased with said payment product are accounted for using said Level 3 Data.

17. The method according to claim 1, wherein said value and said additional value are accruable in an accrued rewards value balance, and wherein said step of providing for redemption of at least a part of at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit is effected if said accrued rewards value balance is at least one of equal to and greater than a pre-selected threshold amount associated with said at least one benefit.

18. A computerized method for effecting a rewards program based on use of a payment product, the method comprising the steps of:

retrieving payment product data associated with a payment product issued by an issuer to a holder, said payment product data including a holder identification and an accrued rewards value balance,

retrieving transaction data associated with at least one purchase transaction using said payment product,

determining from said transaction data whether said at least one purchase transaction using said payment product is a qualifying purchase transaction in compliance with pre-defined rewards eligibility criteria,

calculating a value redeemable by said holder for at least one benefit based on said at least one purchase transaction if said at least one purchase transaction using said payment product is a qualifying purchase transaction,

retrieving travel-related purchase data associated with any travel-related purchases included in said qualifying purchase transaction, determining from said travel-related purchase data if said qualifying purchase transaction includes the purchase of at least one travel ticket and, if so, determining from said travel-related purchase data a travel distance associated with said at least one travel ticket and calculating an additional value redeemable by said holder for said at least one benefit based on said determined travel distance,

updating said accrued rewards value balance based on at least one of said calculated value and said calculated additional value,

comparing said accrued rewards value balance against a pre-selected threshold amount associated with said at least one benefit to ascertain whether said accrued rewards

value balance is sufficient to entitle said holder to receive said at least one benefit, and providing said holder with an opportunity to redeem at least a part of said accrued rewards value balance for said at least one benefit.

19. The method according to claim 18, further comprising the steps of receiving a request by said holder to redeem at least a part of said accrued rewards value balance for said at least one benefit, deducting any redeemed value and additional value from said accrued rewards value balance, and fulfilling said request.

20. The method according to claim 19, wherein said step of fulfilling said request is effected by at least one of said issuer and a fulfillment representative of said issuer.

21. The method according to claim 18, wherein said payment product is at least one of a credit card, a debit card, a bank card, a smart card, and an automated teller machine card.

22. The method according to claim 18, wherein said qualifying purchase transaction includes the purchase of at least one of goods and services from any provider thereof.

23. The method according to claim 18, wherein said step of providing said holder with an opportunity to redeem at least a part of said accrued rewards value balance includes the step of presenting said at least one benefit for selection by said holder in a catalog including at least one of goods and services.

24. The method according to claim 23, wherein said at least one benefit is selected from a provider of at least one of goods and services different from a provider of at least one of goods and services associated with said qualifying purchase transaction.

25. The method according to claim 23, wherein said at least one benefit includes at least one of goods and services that are travel-related.

26. The method according to claim 25, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted travel on a carrier of said holder's choosing.

27. The method according to claim 25, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted travel to a destination of said holder's choosing.

28. The method according to claim 25, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted lodging of said holder's choosing.

29. The method according to claim 23, wherein said catalog is provided over a global computer network.

30. The method according to claim 29, wherein said global computer network is the Internet.

31. The method according to claim 18, wherein said travel-related purchase data is Level 3 Data.

32. The method according to claim 31, wherein individual legs of a trip associated with each travel ticket purchased with said payment product are accounted for using said Level 3 Data.

33. A computerized system for rewarding use of a payment product by the payment product holder, the system comprising:

a payment product issued from an issuer to a holder, said payment product representing funds available to said holder, said payment product providing means of payment for at least one purchase transaction by said holder,

means for determining whether said at least one purchase transaction using said payment product is a qualifying purchase transaction in compliance with pre-defined rewards eligibility criteria of said issuer,

means for providing a value redeemable by said holder for at least one benefit based on said at least one purchase transaction if said at least one purchase transaction using said payment product is a qualifying purchase transaction,

means for determining whether a qualifying purchase transaction includes the purchase of at least one travel ticket, means for determining a travel distance associated with said at least one travel ticket and means for providing an additional value redeemable by said holder for said at least one benefit based on said determined travel distance, and

means for providing for redemption of at least a part of at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit.

34. The system according to claim 33, wherein said payment product is at least one of a credit card, a debit card, a bank card, a smart card, and an automated teller machine card.

35. The system according to claim 33, wherein said qualifying purchase transaction includes the purchase of at least one of goods and services from any provider thereof.

36. The system according to claim 33, further comprising a catalog including at least one of goods and services for presenting said at least one benefit for selection by said holder.

37. The system according to claim 36, wherein said at least one benefit is selected from a provider of at least one of goods and services different from a provider of at least one of goods and services associated with said qualifying purchase transaction.

38. The system according to claim 36, wherein said at least one benefit includes at least one of goods and services that are travel-related.

39. The system according to claim 38, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted travel on a carrier of said holder's choosing.

40. The system according to claim 38, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted travel to a destination of said holder's choosing.

41. The system according to claim 38, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted lodging of said holder's choosing.

42. The system according to claim 36, wherein said catalog is provided over a global computer network.

43. The system according to claim 42, wherein said global computer network is the Internet.

44. The system according to claim 33, wherein said means for providing for redemption of at least a part of at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit includes means for fulfilling a request by said holder to redeem at least part of said at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit.

45. The system according to claim 44, wherein said means for fulfilling a request by said holder to redeem at least part of said at least one of said value and said additional value for said at least one benefit is associated with at least one of said issuer and a fulfillment representative of said issuer.

46. The system according to claim 33, wherein said means for determining a travel distance associated with said at least one travel ticket is adapted to receive and utilize Level 3 Data associated with said qualifying purchase transaction.

47. The system according to claim 46, wherein said means for determining a travel distance associated with said at least one travel ticket is adapted to account for individual legs of a trip associated with each travel ticket purchased with said payment product using said Level 3 Data.

48. The system according to claim 33, further comprising means for maintaining an accrued rewards value balance representing said value and said additional value accumulated and unredeemed by said holder.

49. The system according to claim 48, wherein said means for providing for redemption of at least a part of at least one of said value and said additional value is employed if said accrued rewards value balance is at least one of equal to and greater than a pre-selected threshold amount for said at least one benefit.

50. A computerized system for effecting a rewards program based on use of a payment product, the system comprising:

means for retrieving payment product data associated with a payment product issued by an issuer to a holder, said payment product data including a holder identification and an accrued rewards value balance,

means for retrieving transaction data associated with at least one purchase transaction using said payment product,

means for determining from said transaction data whether said at least one purchase transaction using said payment product is a qualifying purchase transaction in compliance with pre-defined rewards eligibility criteria,

means for calculating a value redeemable by said holder for at least one benefit based on said at least one purchase transaction if said at least one purchase transaction using said payment product is a qualifying purchase transaction,

means for retrieving travel-related purchase data associated with any travel-related purchases included in said qualifying purchase transaction, means for determining from said travel-related purchase data if said qualifying purchase transaction includes the purchase of at least one travel ticket, means for determining from said travel-related purchase data a travel distance associated with said at least one travel ticket and means for calculating an additional value redeemable by said holder for said at least one benefit based on said determined travel distance,

means for updating said accrued rewards value balance based on at least one of said calculated value and said calculated additional value,

means for comparing said accrued rewards value balance against a pre-selected threshold amount associated with said at least one benefit to ascertain whether said

accrued rewards value balance is sufficient to entitle said holder to receive said at least one benefit, and

means for providing said holder with an opportunity to redeem at least a part of said accrued rewards value balance for said at least one benefit.

51. The system according to claim 50, further comprising means for receiving a request by said holder to redeem at least a part of said accrued rewards value balance for said at least one benefit, means for deducting any redeemed value and additional value from said accrued rewards value balance, and means for fulfilling said request.

52. The system according to claim 51, wherein said means for fulfilling said request is associated with at least one of said issuer and a fulfillment representative of said issuer.

53. The system according to claim 50, wherein said payment product is at least one of a credit card, a debit card, a bank card, a smart card, and an automated teller machine card.

54. The system according to claim 50, wherein said qualifying purchase transaction includes the purchase of at least one of goods and services from any provider thereof.

55. The system according to claim 50, further comprising a catalog including at least one of goods and services for presenting said at least one benefit for selection by said holder.

56. The system according to claim 55, wherein said at least one benefit is selected from a provider of at least one of goods and services different from a provider of at least one of goods and services associated with said qualifying purchase transaction.

57. The system according to claim 55, wherein said at least one benefit includes at least one of goods and services that are travel-related.

58. The system according to claim 57, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted travel on a carrier of said holder's choosing.

59. The system according to claim 57, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted travel to a destination of said holder's choosing.

60. The system according to claim 57, wherein said at least one benefit is at least one of free and discounted lodging of said holder's choosing.

61. The system according to claim 55, wherein said catalog is provided over a global computer network.

62. The system according to claim 61, wherein said global computer network is the Internet.

63. The system according to claim 50, wherein said travel-related purchase data is Level 3 Data.

64. The system according to claim 63, wherein said means for determining a travel distance associated with said at least one travel ticket is adapted to account for individual legs of a trip associated with each travel ticket purchased with said payment product using said Level 3 Data.